



SUSAN LAMB MP

Federal Member for Longman



Community News



A MESSAGE FROM SUSAN

It's hard to believe that we're already well into the New Year and Easter is just around the corner! Time has just flown by and there are quite a number of important issues that I wanted to make sure you are kept up-to-date with. In the weeks that Parliament hasn't been sitting, I've been spending time in our community holding discussions with local people, groups, organisations and businesses about the issues that are keeping us up at night. Common themes have been emerging during these conversations, with people telling me that they're finding it harder and harder to get assistance for their families, to find secure work, connect to a decent internet or telephone service, and access a quality education.

In this issue of Community News, I'll be touching on the Government's changes to the Child Care Rebate and what it means for local families. I'll also be reporting-back to you on the progress of the My NBN Sucks campaign and where the Government has landed with the rollout in our area. Mobile reception has also been a huge topic of discussion lately - I'll be letting you know about the steps I have taken to hold the Government accountable to its promise to upgrade cellular towers in our area. We will also take a look at some of the major changes that the Government has made to Human Services and income support in recent years.

Whether you plan on going away or staying local, enjoy the Easter break and be mindful of safety when you're on the roads over the holiday period.

Susan Lamb

SUSAN LAMB MP
FEDERAL MEMBER FOR LONGMAN

YOUR ELECTORATE OFFICE IS HERE TO HELP

Your local Electorate Office is a resource which can help you find answers and resolve local issues. My staff and I work hard to defend the rights and interests of your community, our community. If you have a question about anything you've read in this newsletter, please get in touch.

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Your Child Care Rebate and Benefit could be at risk



The Government has made changes to the Child Care Rebate and Benefit that will affect approximately 2,239 families in our area, beginning July 01 2018. With support from Pauline Hanson and One Nation, both of these payments will be abolished and replaced with the Child Care Subsidy (CCS). This is what we know about the changes so far:

- Households with an income of less than \$65,710 will have their benefits cut.
- Families will have to satisfy a complex set of rules to qualify for government assistance, including a work test and a means test.
- Families will be required to satisfy minimum levels of 'approved activities' each fortnight.

A large period of my life has been spent advocating for Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC), and I know that a child's development rapidly increases when they participate in early education programs. It should be the responsibility of Government to improve access to early childhood education, not make it harder.

With a future Labor Government, I will continue to build on our achievements in the ECEC sector which include:

- Increasing the child care rebate from 30 to 50 per cent of out of pocket costs
- Increasing the child care subsidy to \$7,500
- Partnering with the States and Territories to invest \$970 million to create universal access to preschool for 4 year olds.

A number of parents, guardians and early childhood centres have raised concerns with me about the Government's changes and what it means for families. Areas of particular concern are:

- The ability for casual workers to satisfy the work test with unstable and fluctuating rosters and hours.
- Whether guardians of children in the child safety system, especially grandparents who are retired, will continue to receive support.
- Whether Families with one parent or guardian who receives a Carer Payment will be able to satisfy the new requirements if their partner's income does not exceed the required threshold of \$65,710.

I have written to the Minister for Education, Simon Birmingham, and requested that his office provide urgent clarification on these issues. People in these special circumstances are being left in limbo, not knowing if their benefits will be arbitrarily cut.

Keep checking my Facebook page and website for updates, or contact your Electorate Office directly for more information.

Our community pays for big business tax cuts

Prime Minister Turnbull has managed to get his Government's big business tax cuts through the Lower House. Essentially, our community is being asked to foot the bill with cuts to financial assistance for our local seniors, people living with a disability, families and carers.

Attacks on vulnerable people in our community seem to be a constant item on the Government's agenda. Throughout their two terms, the Liberal Party has continually cut community assistance payments. What is particularly disappointing is the fact that people had been counting on Pauline Hanson and One Nation to stand up for battlers in our area. This has not been the case, with One Nation either having a hand in cutting assistance by voting with the Government to pass measures or being silent and abstaining from voting on the cuts.

Here is a snapshot of the Government's record on cutting community assistance payments:



Disability Support Pensions (DSP)

You now have to satisfy 35 years of 'working life residence' to receive a full DSP. The period of time allowable to travel overseas and receive DSP has reduced.



Age Pension

The Age Pension has reduced by \$3.00 per fortnight for each \$1,000 of assets above your allowable assets. The amount of allowable assets that you're allowed before your Pension is cut has reduced.



Carer Allowance

The ability to backdate payments by 12 weeks has been abolished.



Carer Payment

The same rules of the Age Pension assets test now apply to recipients of Carer Payment.



Family Tax Benefit Part A and B

Increases to payments which factor in things like the cost of living have been frozen and extended until 2020.

The My NBN Sucks campaign investigates black spot areas



Over the last couple of months, complaints have been coming through my office about homes being entirely left out of the NBN build process. In some cases, people who were promised that they would be connected last year have now been told that they have to endure a lengthy wait until 2020. Most recently, people in Narangba and Morayfield have told me that they feel they have been “left behind”.

It isn't good enough that people in our community have to feel this way. I have started writing to residents in pockets of our electorate who have not yet had their NBN connected, letting them know how they can get involved in the My NBN Sucks campaign.

Right up until the next election, the My NBN Sucks campaign will be placing pressure on the Government to deliver Fibre to the Curb (FTTC) at a minimum, instead of Fibre to the Node (FTTN) where it is feasible.

To get involved in the campaign and sign the petition, visit my website:
<http://susanlambmp.com/The-Issues/National-Broadband-Network>



“It’s disappointing that so much money is being invested in the NBN rollout, but we’re unfortunately not seeing any of the benefits flow back into our community. I know that the node around the corner is definitely powered on, and it’s frustrating that we can’t connect to it.”

Jason, Narangba

Government still silent on cellular tower upgrades



Mobile black spots and coverage are a huge issue in our area. I've been working with members of our community, lobbying the Government to finally come through with its promise to upgrade towers in Beachmere, Donnybrook, Meldale, Ningi and Sandstone Point.

As soon as my office opened this year, we made contact with the Minister for Regional Communications, Senator Bridget McKenzie, to find out when we could expect our mobile reception to be improved. I was told that announcements would be made in early February, which would include an expected timeline for completion of the upgrades. Well, we are still waiting.

People in our area deserve to know what is happening. I have written to the Minister requesting a meeting so that we can get the bottom of what is going on with the upgrades.



“We are relying on our mobiles more and more for everything. We should be able to have decent reception while indoors and not be expected to venture outside to make or receive a call, especially at night or during rainy weather. It’s hard to believe that our mobile coverage in the Beachmere area is so poor, considering we live so close to a major city!” **Pauline, Beachmere**

Uni and TAFE students begin the semester with cuts



Many of our high school graduates will begin their university journey with a \$2.2 billion deficit in national education expenditure with Queensland unis suffering \$436 million in cuts.

It has been reported that universities have already been forced to turn away students and cut programs to adjust to the decreased funding. This means around 10,000 students right across the country could miss out on a university place this year.

It's a further blow to education, with the Government already stripping over \$600 million from TAFE campuses in last year's Budget.

I'll be opposing the cuts in Parliament and supporting a tough inquiry which will look at the impact of the Turnbull Government's cuts to education, and investigate ways to rebuild the sector and regenerate opportunities that will up-skill people in our community. With Labor, I have also committed to rebuilding our neglected TAFE campuses by taking our national \$100 million Building TAFE for the Future Fund to the next election.

You can do your bit to help stop the cuts to higher education by signing the petition: <https://www.alp.org.au/unicuts>



*With one of my children attending high school, I find the proposed university cuts to be quite concerning. These days, for many careers, you're required to have some sort of tertiary qualification. Even in some trade-based industries, such as construction, you need a degree to progress 'up the ladder'. We're supposed to be setting our kids up for success, not failure. **April, Ningi***

Current Inquiries

As your local Member, it's my job to make sure you're able to have a direct say in Government policy. There are a number of ways that I facilitate this, including encouraging people to make submissions to Parliamentary Inquiries. Take a look at some of the current opportunities where you can have your say.

Inquiry into crystal methamphetamine (ice)

This inquiry is seeking submissions on preventing criminal practices involved in importing, manufacturing and distributing ice and the impact that it has on our community.



Have your say and make a submission:
<http://bit.ly/2orwUvL>

Inquiry into the business case for the National Broadband Network

This committee will investigate the long-term outlook of the National Broadband Network (NBN) rollout.



Have your say and make a submission:
<http://bit.ly/2orbTRR>

General issues around the implementation and performance of the NDIS

People living with a disability and service providers are encouraged to submit feedback on the process of becoming Scheme participants, being a client and providers' transition to the scheme.



Have your say and make a submission:
<http://bit.ly/2ENnKF2>

Community Highlights



Lunar New Year 2018

Traditional dancing, music, delicious food - this year's Lunar New Year celebrations at the Caboolture Hub had it all! With 2018's zodiac sign being the Dog, I had a bit of fun handing out some masks I had made for the event.



Open Office

Open Offices are a great opportunity to hear from locals about their projects and plans to support people and families in our community. Where we can, my office arranges to take brief appointments outside normal hours to provide support, advice, guidance and advocacy on individual issues and community projects.



Australia Day

Beachmere Bakery whipped up a batch of 'Lambingtons' to help us celebrate with the locals at the Bongaree Australia Day event. Of course, it wouldn't have been a real Bribie event without a sausage sizzle, with the Bribie Lions Club and Vietnam Veterans' Association doing the honours.



Electorate Office hours over the Easter break

Your Electorate Office will be closed on the Good Friday (30 March) and Easter Monday (02 April) public holidays. Usual Electorate Office hours will apply outside of these public holidays.

